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Japan-Mongolia: The Japanese are showing renewed interest in establishing relations with Ulan Bator but will probably proceed slowly because of Taipei's strong opposition.

Two Foreign Ministry officials are scheduled to make a "fact-finding tour" to Mongolia next month, the fourth in a series of routine trips over the past few years. Ulan Bator no longer insists on war reparations, a major stumbling block in the past to establishment of relations. Mongolia is apparently prepared to accept some form of economic aid instead.

Ambassador Shimoda in Washington recently said that his government believes recognition would be consistent with Japan's general policy of improving relations with Communist countries close to Moscow and not hostile to Japan. The move would be generally popular in Japan.

Tokyo is probably hoping for some US support in overcoming long-standing opposition by Taipei, which claims that Mongolia is rightfully part of China.

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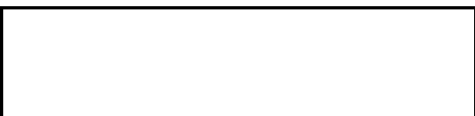
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